

BLOOMINGTON YESTERDAY NEW TECHNOLOGY HELPS, BUT FIREFIGHTERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Although Bloomington's Fire Department wasn't officially organized until 1947, in 1946, the City, then a township, purchased its first fire truck to carry rescue equipment and supplies. It was outfitted with a 250-gallon-per-minute pump and a 500-gallon booster tank.

The Fire Department grew and in 1951 purchased a Mack pumper truck with a 1,000-gallon booster tank. The truck had seating for two. (Others could ride on the tailboard.) Soon after, a third truck was added to the fleet.

Today, the Fire Department owns 37 emergency vehicles to serve



a population of more than 83,000 residents and many businesses.

According to Assistant Fire Chief Jay Forster, the current trucks are safer (no more riding the tailboards) and include far more bells and whistles.

"The trucks today may be more technologically advanced, but they

still need people to operate them," he said. "It's our firefighters who make the difference."

Bloomington's volunteer Fire Department comprises 120 paid-on-call firefighters and two full-time employees.

BIG PLANS FOR SOUTH LOOP CONSTRUCTION IS ALREADY UNDERWAY TO TRANSFORM AREA

In 2011, the State Legislature appropriated \$15 million to help the City of Bloomington implement infrastructure improvements in the South Loop District, beginning with the Lindau Lane corridor project.

"The City's overall goal for the South Loop District is to create a distinctive urban center where people can experience both work and community," Community Development Director Larry Lee said. "A crossroads of the metro area's major transportation networks, the district is just above the quiet, unspoiled beauty of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Lindau Lane will serve as the district's anchor and spine for new development in the South Loop."

Many construction projects are slated to begin in the district in 2013 and 2014. Phases 1 and 2 of the Lindau Lane construction will begin on the north side of the Mall of America. A storm sewer is being constructed on 24th Avenue. An additional project on the south side of the Mall of America, a pedestrian bridge over Killebrew Drive connecting the Radisson Blu Hotel

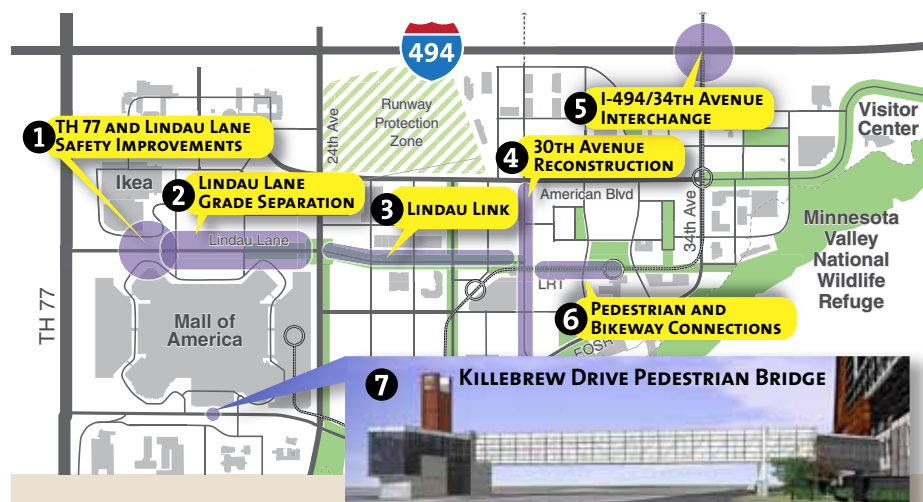
and properties (hotels, restaurants and offices) south of Killebrew, will be constructed in 2013. The pedestrian bridge will improve safety by replacing the at-grade pedestrian crossings. It will be completely covered and partially temperature-controlled with elevator and stair access on the south side.

The Metropolitan Airports Commission and Minnesota Department of Transportation will be rebuilding the interchange at I-494 and 34th Avenue as a diverging diamond interchange. The primary objective of the reconstruction is to increase capacity of the interchange

for added vehicles from future South Loop development and the expansion of Terminal 2 at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

These infrastructure improvements set the stage for new residential, retail, hotel and office development by improving pedestrian and vehicle circulation and attracting visitors and employers to the South Loop.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: SOUTH LOOP.



THE SOUTH LOOP TRANSFORMATION HAS SEVERAL PARTS:

- 1 TH 77 and Lindau Lane safety improvements helps reduce accidents near IKEA Way – Bloomington's highest-crash intersection.
- 2 Lindau Lane grade separation prepares for future phases north of Mall of America. Lindau Lane will tunnel under a plaza that connects buildings over the street.
- 3 Lindau Lane extension creates a new, more walkable street lined with storefronts between 24th and 30th Avenues.
- 4 30th Avenue reconstruction between American Boulevard and East Old Shakopee Road converts a private access to a public street that connects Lindau Lane to north and south arterial streets.
- 5 I-494/34th Avenue Interchange improvements.
- 6 Pedestrian and bikeway connections link 30th Avenue and the Bloomington Central Station Park.
- 7 Pedestrian bridge construction over Killebrew Drive.

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When you see **WEBSITE KEYWORDS**, go to www.ci.bloomington.mn.us for more information.



FIND US ON YOUTUBE LOOK FOR THE VIDEO ICON FOR MORE INFORMATION

Have you caught *The Buzz* in Bloomington? Do you enjoy watching the City's cable news program *Bloomington Today*? Throughout the *Briefing*, look for the video icon, pictured above, that indicates a video version of the story you're reading is available.



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD PRODUCE YOUR OWN TV SHOW

Did you know you can produce your own TV show on Bloomington Public Access Television (BCAT)? Annual membership fees are \$45 for individuals, \$15 for students and \$125 for organizations.

For more information, call Production Specialist Gina Simmons at 952-563-4980.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: BCAT.

ENJOY PLAYING VOLLEYBALL? JOIN THE BORN AGAIN JOCKS

The Born Again Jocks volleyball league welcomes men, 55 years and older, of all skill levels. Games are held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 9 a.m., at Kennedy High School, 9701 Nicollet Avenue.

For more information, call Don Wilkie at 952-884-2146 or Don Wagner at 952-831-4460.



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MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY
VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME CAN BE REWARDING

By Mayor Gene Winstead



Bloomington residents are highly satisfied with the quality of City services, according to a poll conducted by the National Research Center of Boulder, Colorado, in 2012. The poll showed approximately 90 percent of respondents rated the overall quality of life in Bloomington as excellent or good and 94 percent responded that they would recommend living in Bloomington. As a City organization, we were very pleased with these results.

The reason we conducted the survey was to get your opinion on how we are doing. The survey also shed light on some areas that need improvement. One of these areas is volunteering. Although the survey showed that 93 percent of Bloomington residents had provided help to a friend or neighbor during 2012, only 39 percent had volunteered their time to a group or organization in the city. This was much less than the national benchmark for similar communities.

Bloomington has always been a community of neighbors who look out for one another. Perhaps we can all resolve to make 2013 the year that we make a difference in our community through volunteerism.

Plenty of volunteer opportunities can be found at Creekside Community Center, Bloomington Crime Prevention Association, Bloomington Parks and Recreation, VEAP, H.O.M.E. and Bridging. You need not travel far from your home to find a volunteer opportunity.

Many of you already volunteer your time. Many of our businesses support and encourage their employees to volunteer. However, for those of you who don’t volunteer, but have always been interested in doing so, the City can provide you with the resources to find that perfect opportunity. There are many places that appreciate any level of help, no matter how infrequent – just a few hours a month can be enough to make a difference.

When you volunteer, your efforts strengthen the local services available to members of the community. Volunteering raises awareness of important social needs, connects communities and builds friendships. Change your life and the lives of those around you – volunteer in 2013.

The following is a list of examples of City of Bloomington organizations that could use your help. For more volunteer opportunities, contact Human Services at 952-563-8733 or visit the [City’s website](#).

WEBSITE KEYWORD: VOLUNTEER.

- Bloomington Community Access Television – Help others with their television programs.
- Bloomington Police Explorers – Learn about law enforcement by doing community projects.
- Book ‘Em – Help sort and sell used books at the Bloomington Crime Prevention Association’s annual sale.
- Fire Department – Join our all-volunteer fire department.
- Human Services Division – Engage in a wide array of volunteer opportunities for all ages.
- Police – Join Neighborhood Watch and volunteer as a block captain. *See page 8 for more information.*
- Parks and Recreation programs – Volunteer for summer programs or during the winter as an outdoor ice rink attendant.

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

GIVING STUDENTS A VOICE
KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CHOOSE HEALTHIER OPTIONS FOR SCHOOL MENU

Ask some Kennedy High School students and they’ll tell you they weren’t thrilled about the prospect of healthier school lunch regulations – until they were asked to be involved in choosing those healthier options that would soon be added to the school’s a la carte menu.

Bloomington Public Health Nutritionist Joan Bulfer with the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) joined forces with Kennedy High School marketing teacher Cheryl Martin, the nonprofit marketing organization Brand Lab and Kennedy High School students to test and market healthier menu options.

Kennedy High School Food Production Specialist Connie Murray created the healthier food samples for students to taste test, including one of two the students selected for their a la carte lunch line, strawberry parfait. How did the students react? One student summed it up by saying, “Yum, yum, yum. I’d buy it every day!”

These new, healthier options will be promoted to the entire student body through a student-run marketing campaign this winter.

Through SHIP, Bloomington Public Health is helping several schools implement additional nutrition and physical activity guidelines that will provide more physical activity during the school day and more opportunities to eat healthier foods.

Bloomington Public Health is the lead agency for SHIP in Bloomington, Edina and Richfield.



For more information, contact Public Health Nutritionist Joan Bulfer at 952-563-8992 or e-mail jbulfer@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: SHIP

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BLOOMINGTON CITY COUNCIL



Mayor
Gene Winstead
952-888-1258 (h)
952-563-8782 (w)
gwinstead@ci.bloomington.mn.us

Councilmember At Large
Tim Busse
952-457-7506 (c)
tbusse@ci.bloomington.mn.us



Councilmember At Large
Karen Nordstrom
952-831-5221 (h)
knordstrom@ci.bloomington.mn.us

Councilmember District I
Steve Peterson
952-884-3262 (h)
speterson@ci.bloomington.mn.us



Councilmember District II
Tom Hulting
952-942-9164 (h)
thulting@ci.bloomington.mn.us

Councilmember District III
Jack Baloga
952-944-5194 (h)
jbaloga@ci.bloomington.mn.us



Councilmember District IV
Vern Wilcox
952-854-1425 (h)
vwilcox@ci.bloomington.mn.us

Elected officials presented for informational purposes.

COUNCILMEMBERS

council@ci.bloomington.mn.us

CITY MANAGER

Mark Bernhardson 952-563-8780
citymanager@ci.bloomington.mn.us

DIRECTORS

Larry Lee, <i>Community Development</i>	952-563-8947
llee@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
Diann Kirby, <i>Community Services</i>	952-563-8717
communityservices@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
Lori Economy-Scholler, <i>Finance</i>	952-563-8791
finance@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
Ulie Seal, <i>Fire</i>	952-881-4062
fire@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
Kay McAloney, <i>Human Resources</i>	952-563-4898
kmcaloney@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
Sandra Johnson, <i>Legal</i>	952-563-4895
legal@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
Jeffrey Potts, <i>Police</i>	952-563-8601
police@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
Karl Keel, <i>Public Works</i>	952-563-8731
publicworks@ci.bloomington.mn.us	
General phone number	952-563-8700

The City of Bloomington complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. For more information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; 952-563-8733 (Voice); 952-563-8740 (TTY).



A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT
RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY
CELEBRATES TH 169/I-494

Commuters along the I-494 corridor were rejoicing in November, thankful that the TH 169/I-494 interchange reconstruction, after two years in the making and countless years of planning, was finally complete. According to Deputy Director of Public Works Jim Gates, who played an instrumental role in seeing the reconstruction through to completion, the project came in on budget and was finished on schedule.

The completion was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by several City employees including Gates, Director of Public Works Karl Keel and Bloomington City Councilmember Karen Nordstrom, who served as Acting Mayor for the event, *see photo above*.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: 169 494



KEEPING YOU MOVING

ROUNABOUT REFRESHER
LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE NEW ADDITIONS IN BLOOMINGTON

The TH 169/I-494 interchange reconstruction, *see story left*, improved safety and mobility along TH 169 by converting the expressway to a freeway, eliminating traffic signals at the ramps and adding six new roundabouts to the new frontage road system.

Three roundabouts are located directly north of I-494 and the other three are located directly south of I-494. Not familiar with how to drive around a roundabout? Below is a brief introduction to roundabouts, along with a few tips to get you going.

Why do we use roundabouts?

Roundabouts are often used in new or remodeled intersections to lower the incidence of crashes. Benefits of roundabouts include: better safety, improved traffic flow and better fuel efficiency and air quality.

Navigating roundabouts

- Slow down as you approach the roundabout.
- For multilane roundabouts, get into the appropriate lane as you approach.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the roadway.
- Watch for signs or pavement markings that require or prohibit certain movements.
- When entering a roundabout, yield to vehicles already in the roundabout. Do not cross into the roundabout until all traffic from the left has cleared.
- After entering the roundabout, drive in a counterclockwise direction until you reach your exit.
- Do not stop, pass or change lanes within a roundabout.
- If an emergency vehicle approaches, exit the roundabout immediately and then pull over.

For more information, visit the [City's website](#).

WEBSITE KEYWORD: ROUNABOUTS.



SPRUCE UP YOUR HOME
HOME IMPROVEMENT LOANS

The Bloomington Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is accepting applications through March 15 for its Home Improvement Deferred Loan Program. The loans help residents maintain the condition of their homes and neighborhoods.

Loans of up to \$35,000 are available to qualified Bloomington homeowners. There are no monthly payments. Repayment occurs when the home is sold, transferred or is no longer occupied by the owner. Interest is accrued at an annual simple rate of 4 percent per year of the original loan principal for the first 10 years. No additional interest is charged after the 10th year.

A lead risk assessment is required for all homes built before 1978. Applications are ranked and processed according to need. Eligible repairs include replacing roofs, electrical, heating and plumbing systems, gutters, windows, doors, insulation and siding.

To qualify for a Home Improvement Deferred Loan, you must own and occupy your home; the home must be at least 10 years old and you must have sufficient equity to cover the loan amount. Maximum gross income limits apply. *See table below*.

Current annual income limits

1 household member	\$45,100
2 household members	\$51,550
3 household members	\$58,000
4 household members	\$64,400
5 household members	\$69,600
6 household members	\$74,750
7 household members	\$79,900
8+ household members	\$85,050

Loan applications will be accepted at the HRA office at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.

For more information or to receive an application, call 952-563-8937 or visit the [City's website](#).

WEBSITE KEYWORDS:
HOME IMPROVEMENT LOANS



FINANCIAL UPDATE
CITY COUNCIL APPROVES 2013 PROPERTY TAX LEVY

The City Council set the property tax levy for 2013. As a result, in 2013 Bloomington residents with a median-valued home of \$194,500 will pay \$66.04 a month for City services –\$1.78 less than the \$67.82 they paid in 2010, 2011 and 2012. According to Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler, this means lower taxes for 84 percent of the residential population.

“Based on this property tax levy, the City’s portion of 2013 total residential property taxes is 29 cents out of every tax dollar paid,” Economy-Scholler said. “The City’s objective is to maintain the monthly cost of City services at or below the same level as in 2010, 2011 and 2012.”

The City Council adopted a property tax levy for 2013 of \$46,641,219. Although this is a 4.95 percent increase from 2012, this follows two years of total property tax levy decreases, resulting in a 1.53 percent average annual increase over the past three years. Many homeowners will not be affected because the average median home value continued to drop through 2011, the basis for 2013 taxes.

Some homeowners saw the value of their properties decrease and their portions of local taxes increase. This is because there is not a direct correlation between property values and property taxes as there is between purchases and



SINGLE-FAMILY HOME MONTHLY PROPERTY TAX COST FOR CITY SERVICES			
	2011	2012	2013
Median value home	\$67.82	\$67.82	\$66.04
Average value home	\$79.73	\$78.58	\$77.22

2013 Median value home - \$194,500; 2013 Average value home - \$221,200.

sales or income taxes. Governments in Minnesota levy a total property tax dollar amount; they do not set the tax rate, as some states do. In the property tax system, market value is used to create a proportionate share of the tax levy.

“A homeowner’s tax bill is a factor of how all other city properties change in value,” Economy-Scholler said. “The average median-valued property decreased 6.2 percent in value for taxes payable in 2013. The City cost for property tax-supported services for a median-valued home should decrease compared to the 2012 tax with the approved levy.”

If your property maintained its value better than the median-valued home, as

it did for one out of five taxpayers, your share of the tax levy most likely showed an increase. Home sales in 2011 continued to reflect the housing downturn and are the basis for the 2012 assessment for taxes payable in 2013. Home sales in 2012 indicate a slowing rate of decline for the 2013 assessment, which will be the basis for 2014 taxes. Total market value for all Bloomington properties that was \$10.4 billion for taxes payable in 2011, dropped to \$10.1 billion for 2012 and dropped again to \$9.9 billion for 2013.

For more information, contact Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler at 952-563-8791 or leconomy@ci.bloomington.mn.us.



EARTH ACTION HEROES
GIRL SCOUTS GALVANIZE FOR
THE ENVIRONMENT

More than 240 Bloomington Girl Scouts joined troops from 49 counties across Minnesota and Wisconsin this past October in a service project aimed at preserving water quality in their communities. The Bloomington Girl Scouts collaborated with Public Works as part of their Centennial Day of Service to clean up the environment.

Under the guidance of Public Works employees, the Girl Scouts spent an entire day cleaning out storm sewer grates and debris from catch basins - a significant task, considering that clearing storm drains prevents waterways from being polluted by runoff and other contaminants. They labeled catch basins with stickers that read “Only rain down the storm drain.” Door hangers told residents about how to keep storm drains clean.

The girls filled more than 260 bags with leaves and other debris, preventing countless amounts of phosphorus and other harmful chemicals from entering Bloomington’s lakes, ponds and streams. According to troop leader Jennifer Gorder, whose daughter also participated in the event, the girls received a lot of help from Public Works including compost bags and maps highlighting high-risk zones around Nine Mile Creek.

“Each zone we worked in had a drop-off area for bags. All we had to do was leave the bags at the designated area and Public Works crews picked them up,” Gorder said. “This was a wonderful citywide effort that made a big impact on the environment.”

Gorder said she hopes this will be the beginning of more collaboration with the City.

“This was our first project and it was a complete success,” Gorder said. “I can definitely see us increasing involvement and doing even more for the environment in the future.”

LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD

2013 CITYWIDE CURBSIDE CLEANUP

GET READY TO DECLUTTER!

The Citywide Curbside Cleanup is right around the corner. **Be sure you’re prepared by setting your materials at the curb before 7 a.m. on your pickup day.**

Seniors and disabled residents should contact their Neighborhood Watch block captains or call Human Services, 952-563-8733, TTY 952-563-8740, for assistance. Requests for assistance must be made at least one week in advance. See the April Briefing for more details.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: CLEANUP.

2013 CLEANUP SCHEDULE	
East of Portland	Saturday, April 13
Portland to Penn	Saturday, April 20
Penn to France	Saturday, April 27
France to Normandale	Saturday, May 4
West of Normandale	Saturday, May 11



To receive Curbside schedule reminders, scan the QR code below or visit the City’s website, click on [E-Subscribe](#), and sign up for e-mail updates.



RECYCLING
GUIDE



PAPER

- Mail, office and school papers
- Magazines and catalogs
- Newspapers and inserts
- Phone books
- Shredded paper in closed paper bags



BOXES:

- Cardboard
- Cereal and cracker boxes
- Shoe boxes, gift boxes and electronics boxes
- Toothpaste, medication and other toiletry boxes

CARTONS

- Milk cartons
- Juice boxes
- Soup, broth and wine cartons



GLASS

- Food and beverage bottles and jars



PLASTIC

BOTTLES
AND JUGS:

- Water, soda and juice bottles
- Milk and juice jugs
- Ketchup and salad dressing bottles
- Shampoo, soap and lotion bottles
- Dishwashing liquid bottles and detergent jugs



CUPS AND CONTAINERS:

- Yogurt, pudding and fruit cups
- Disposable cups and bowls
- Produce, deli and take out containers
- Margarine, cottage cheese and other containers

PACKAGING:

- Clear packaging from toys and electronics

METAL

- Food and beverage cans




DON’T RECYCLE: Styrofoam™, plastic wrap, microwaveable food trays, paper soiled with food, paper plates and towels, drinking glasses, dishes, mirrors or containers that held hazardous products.




MAKING INNOVATIVE IMPROVEMENTS

HELPING YOU NAVIGATE YOUR CITY
CITY UPDATES INTERACTIVE MAP SYSTEM


The City recently updated its interactive website map system to make it easier for you to find information on construction, street sweeping, zoning locations and traffic conditions. How does it work? A new application called “My World” expertly organizes data stored in the City’s geographic information system (GIS) and Google Maps.




Property information – Look up a parcel and see its size, zoning or historical significance, Federal Emergency Management data and a link to a plat drawing.




Street sweeping progress (seasonal) – City crews get out and spiff up our roads. Check out the progress of our hard-working Public Works staff.




Construction projects – Choose a specific address and see what projects are underway around that neighborhood, including City infrastructure construction and utility work.



Land Use Guide Plan and zoning information – Check out a parcel’s land use or zoning designations.



Maximum building height – View the maximum building heights allowed by the Bloomington City Code.



Traffic – View live traffic updates from Google Maps.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: GIS ONLINE.

HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

EMPOWERING CITIZENS

Human Services works with citizens to provide exceptional programs and services to community members of all ages. Some are described below, but all are contained in the *Human Services Community Resource Catalog*. Pick up your catalog at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, or Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South, or find it online.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: RESOURCE CATALOG.

For more information, call Human Services at 952-563-8733 or TTY 952-563-8740. To sign up for e-mail updates, go to our website, click on *E-Subscribe* and subscribe to “Human Services.”

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: HUMAN SERVICES.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY
VISIT THE FACES OF
BLOOMINGTON DISPLAY

For the past six months, the Bloomington Human Rights Commission and Bloomington Historical Society have been collecting some amazing photos of residents for this special project. The collection is mounted into the geographical shape of Bloomington and will be on display at Bloomington Civic Plaza, Old Town Hall, Creekside Community Center, and other civic and community sites.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: FACES.



BUILDING STRONG BONES
NEW FITNESS CLASS AT CREEKSIDE

Are you interested in exercising in a group setting? Are you concerned about osteoporosis? If this sounds like you, consider joining Bone Builders at Creekside, a free strength training and balance exercise program designed to address osteoporosis issues. Adults of all fitness levels are encouraged to participate. Classes begin **Saturday, February 9**, and are held each Tuesday and Saturday throughout the year with the exception of holidays.

This program is being offered by Bloomington Human Services and Volunteers of America RSVP. A signed medical release form is required to participate. To register, call 952-563-4944.

BEAT THE WINTER BLUES
MEALS ARE BETTER WITH FRIENDS

Visit Creekside Diner for food, fun and friendship. Delicious meals are served **Monday - Friday at 11:30 a.m.** The cost for meals is a suggested donation of up to \$3 for adults 60 and older and \$6 for guests under age 60. A three-day advance registration is required. Several times throughout the month a special lunch event is held, *see below*, and may include entertainment, door prizes and more. To make a reservation, call 952-563-4944.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: CITY DINER.

SPECIAL LUNCH EVENTS

- Wednesday, February 20** – Lunch and Laugh: Ice Cream Social – Enjoy a cool treat and live music by the Gary & Sue Band performing songs from the 1940s through 1960s.
- Wednesday, February 27** – Lunch and Bingo.



SIGNALING A CHANGE
CITY CONVERTS TRAFFIC SIGNAL
LIGHTS TO LEDs

The City finished converting all City-owned traffic signal lights to LEDs in 2012. However, if you’ve been out driving around Bloomington this fall and winter, chances are you’ve noticed Hennepin County traffic signal crews working on traffic lights. The crews have been busy re-lamping Hennepin County-owned intersection lights, replacing the older incandescent signal indicators with more energy-efficient light-emitting diode (LED) models.

Approximately 55 of the 146 traffic signals in Bloomington are operated by Hennepin County and all will be converted to LEDs by the end of the month. According to Bloomington Traffic Supervisor Cherise Erickson, LEDs shine brighter than incandescent lights, save energy and require little or no maintenance.

“The City changed over to LEDs not only because they save energy, but because they drastically reduce maintenance expenses, replacement costs and pollution,” Erickson said. “They’re also considered safer because they’re much brighter than incandescent bulbs.”

For more information, visit the [City’s website](#).

WEBSITE KEYWORD:
SUSTAINABLE

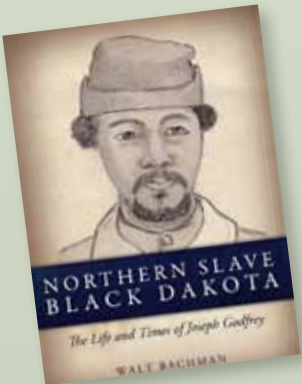


EXPLORING OUR
HISTORY
CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY
MONTH

Join the Bloomington Human Rights Commission for a special Black History Month presentation, *Northern Slaves: How the U.S. Army Brought Slavery to Minnesota*, **Sunday, February 24, 2 - 4 p.m.**, at Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South.

Walt Bachman, author of *Northern Slave, Black Dakota: The Life and Times of Joseph Godfrey*, will share research from his book. Advance copies will be available for sale and signing. This free event is cosponsored by the Pond-Dakota Historical Society and Bloomington Historical Society.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: BLACK HISTORY MONTH



FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICES
RECEIVE INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE AT CREEKSIDE



Tax assistance will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis to individuals who meet income-qualifying guidelines. AccountAbility Minnesota and AARP will be available to prepare your taxes during the following dates and times.

AccountAbility Minnesota

- Income-qualifying guidelines: \$30,000 or less for individuals and \$50,000 or less for families.
- Tuesdays and Thursdays through April 16, 5:45 - 9:30 p.m., and Saturdays through April 13, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (March hours are: 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.)

AARP Tax-Aide

- AARP Tax-Aide serves low to moderate income tax payers.
- Mondays and Tuesdays through April 15, 9 a.m. - noon.
- Fridays, March 15 - April 12, 9 a.m. - noon.

Taxpayers with complex tax returns are advised to seek paid tax assistance. Human Services Division is partnering with AccountAbility Minnesota and AARP Tax-Aide to make these programs available. For more information on these Human Services programs and events, call 952-563-4944.

REGISTER ONLINE

VISIT THE CITY’S WEBSITE TO REGISTER ONLINE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND LEAGUES.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: ONLINE REGISTRATION.



A BIG DEAL
BLOOMINGTON ICE GARDEN TO HOST NATIONAL COMPETITION

Bloomington Ice Garden (BIG) has been selected as the venue to host the 2016 U.S. Figure Skating Championships. BIG will host the juvenile, intermediate and novice level contests, while Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul will serve as the site for the junior and senior skating championships.

The annual event, held since 1914, is the nation’s most prestigious figure skating event. The U.S. Figure Skating Championships, which serve as the final qualifying event to make the U.S. World Figure Skating Team and the U.S. Olympic Team every four years, attract hundreds of athletes, coaches and officials to the host community.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: BIG.



SUMMER SOFTBALL
PLAY AMERICA’S FAVORITE GAME

Registrations are now being accepted for summer adult softball leagues, including men’s, women’s and co-rec. Leagues are hosted at Dred Scott, 10820 Bloomington Ferry Road, and Valley View, 9000 Portland Avenue South, playfields.

Leagues are for adults, ages 18 and older. Single-game leagues play 10 games a season and doubleheader leagues play 20 games a season. All teams sanctioned in the ASA and USSSA.

- When: Monday - Friday, starting April 26.
- Cost: Single Game Leagues: \$570 + tax, per team.
Double Header Leagues: \$810 + tax, per team.
- Deadline: February 22 for returning teams and March 4 for new teams.

OUT AND ABOUT

HEALTHY LIVING MADE EASY

CONSTANTLY IMPROVING
PROVIDING QUALITY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

To keep Bloomington’s parks and recreation facilities beautiful and safe, the City continually undertakes revitalization projects to replace aging equipment and improve safety. The following projects are planned for 2013:

- Adding parking lot security lighting and drinking fountains for humans (and dogs!) at the Off-leash Recreation Area for Dogs, 111th Street between Nesbitt and Hampshire Avenues.
- Installing foul ball safety netting on softball fields 8-11 at Dred Scott Playfields, 10820 Bloomington Ferry Road.
- Creating a seasonal off-leash recreation area for dogs within the broomball rinks at Tretbaugh Park, 3701 West 90th Street. (For non-winter use.)
- Replacing aging playground equipment and installing a new parking lot, picnic shelter, half-court basketball pad and landscaping at Maplewood Park, 131 East 95th Street.
- Replacing aging playground equipment and adding security lighting to Southwood Playground, 4800 Terracewood Drive.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: PARKS LISTING.

GET OUT AND GROW
COMMUNITY GARDEN PLOTS

Do you love to garden, but don’t have the space for your own? Community gardens are growing in Bloomington. Garden plots are available for public use at Smith Park, 8155 Park Avenue South, and Harrison Park, 1701 West 100th Street. Community garden plots are 10 by 15 feet and are available April 15 - October 23 for \$36 per plot. For more information, call Parks and Recreation at 952-563-8882.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: GARDEN PLOTS.

There are also many other community garden plots in the city. For more information, contact one of the coordinators listed below.

Cedarcrest Community Garden
1630 East 90th Street
Garden Coordinator: Betty Stennes
Contact: bstennes@hotmail.com

Christ the King Community Garden
8600 Fremont Street
Garden Coordinator: Ann Carr
Contact: carrbeepbeep@hotmail.com

St. Marks Community Garden
8630 Xerxes Avenue South
Garden Coordinator: Jayne Kainulainen
Contact: jaynekain53@gmail.com



NEW THIS YEAR
SUPER SIGN-UP MOVES TO TUESDAY

Register for youth programs online or in person on Tuesday, March 19. Why the change from Saturday to Tuesday? We want to have 100 percent of our staff available to assist you. Also new this year – everyone will have the ability to register online, including those receiving fee assistance.

Summer registration kicks off online and at the Parks and Recreation counter at Bloomington Civic Plaza, **Tuesday, March 19 at 8 a.m.** For more information, call Parks and Recreation at 952-563-8877.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: SUMMER SPECTRUM.

GET OUT AND ACTIVE!

MAKE IT A COOL SUMMER AT THE POOL
BUY A BLOOMINGTON FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER (BFAC) SEASON PASS

Don’t miss out. Buy your BFAC resident season pass before April 12 to receive \$2 off or prior to June 7 to receive \$1 off.* If you bring your old pass to be reactivated, you’ll receive an additional dollar off. Passes are sold at the Parks and Recreation counter at Bloomington Civic Plaza, beginning March 19 through June 7. Beginning June 5, passes will be available daily, 4 - 7 p.m., at the BFAC, 301 East 90th Street. BFAC is open **June 8 - August 18** and weekends through Labor Day.

**Season passes for those under 18 years old must be purchased by a legal guardian.*



2013 RESIDENT SEASON PASS (PRICES INCLUDE TAX)	
Infant, age 1 and under	Free
Child, age 2 - 10	\$16.75
Young adult, age 11 - 15	\$28.50
Adult, age 16 - 54	\$52.00
Senior, age 55 and up	\$16.75

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: AQUATIC CENTER.

FOR CREATIVE KIDDIES
SPRING BREAK MINI “CAMPS” FOR KIDS

Bloomington Theatre and Art Center (BTAC) offers visual and performing arts classes and workshops for young people in painting, drawing, clay, glass and more. Spring break “mini camps” for kids are happening **March 7 and 8**. For a catalog of class offerings, call 952-563-8575 or visit www.btacmn.org.



GET MOVING WITH L’IL FLIPSTERS
GYMNASTICS PROGRAM PROVIDES FITNESS AND FUN

L’il Flipsters Gymnastics is designed especially for children, ages 30 months to kindergarten. This mobile gymnastics organization provides gymnastics training and motor skill development in a safe, fun and nurturing environment. New sessions begin every month through May 2012.

Classes are held at Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 West 98th Street, Tuesday and Friday mornings and Tuesday afternoons. Classes are \$30 per three-week session, \$40 for a four-week session and \$50 for a five-week session.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: FLIPSTERS.



THE EGG HUNT IS ON!
DON’T MISS THIS ANNUAL FAMILY EVENT

Kids, age eight and younger, won’t want to miss this “eggs”traordinary annual event sponsored by Bloomington Parks and Recreation and the Bloomington Breakfast Optimist Club. While you’re there, check out the family fun walk, informational booths and musical entertainment.

- When: Saturday, March 30, 9:30 a.m. - noon.
- Time: **Hunt begins 11:30 a.m.**
- Where: Normandale Lake Bandshell, 5901 West 84th Street.



HAPPENINGS AT BLOOMINGTON CIVIC PLAZA

SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL ARTISTS

CITY PARTNERS WITH BTAC TO BRING ORIGINAL ARTWORK TO BLOOMINGTON CIVIC PLAZA



If you've visited Bloomington Civic Plaza lately, you've probably noticed that the hallways are a little more colorful. Walls that were once bare are now adorned with paintings by local artists. The artwork will be displayed year-round as part of a partnership with the Bloomington Theatre and Art Center (BTAC) to show original artwork by regional artists throughout the building. The infusion of art along the corridors helps make a visual connection

between the arts and the City, while supporting local artists. The City of Bloomington is unique in that it houses a Center for the Arts and City Hall on the same campus. The second floor corridor of Bloomington Civic Plaza is where you'll find the painting *On that Day*, by Bloomington native Megan Bell Honigman. On the first floor you'll find *That's How They Come Out*, by St. Paul artists Ray Becoskie and Caprice Glaser, and Bryan Young's landscape *After Hours*. If the artwork looks familiar, it's because all four artists have previously showcased their work in Greenberg Gallery exhibits. Center for the Arts Manager Jim Urie anticipates the City will acquire a total of 10 pieces. "Most of the artwork will be on display for two years, with an option for the City to purchase the artwork at the end of the loan period," he said. "The City supports the program with an artists' stipend for each two-year contract and by installing the artwork." For more information on the arts and what's happening at Bloomington Civic Plaza, see below.



ENCOURAGING BUDDING WRITERS

10TH ANNUAL WRITERS' FESTIVAL AND BOOK FAIR

The Annual Writers' Festival and Book Fair attracts hundreds of writers of all experience levels to come together for their craft. This year, the event takes place **Saturday, March 23, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.**, at Bloomington Civic Plaza. Organized by the Bloomington Literary Council with support from Bloomington Theatre and Art Center, the Writers' Festival and Book Fair offers participants a chance to sit down and talk about writing with published authors, network with their peers and enjoy a free book fair. Participants also have the opportunity to enjoy author readings, workshops, panels, and a keynote address by author, lecturer and master teacher Tom Hegg. For more information or to register, call 952-563-8575 or visit www.btacmn.org.



Sunday, March 10, noon - 4 p.m. Bloomington Center for the Arts 1800 West Old Shakopee Road

Taste of Chocolate is an annual dessert competition and benefit for Bloomington arts organizations. It is presented in partnership with the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by *Minnesota Monthly*, Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau, Mall of America, the Toro Company, Richfield Bloomington Credit Union, Destination Bloomington, *The Bloomington Crow* and Burt's Disposal. Enjoy chocolates by chefs and chocolatiers, chocolate-making demonstrations, entertainment, a silent auction and a raffle drawing for extraordinary prizes. Tickets are \$25 in advance; \$30 at the door. To purchase tickets, stop by the Continental Ballet box office, Monday - Friday, 3:30 - 7 p.m., call 952-563-8562 or visit www.tasteofchocolate.org. For more information, call Bloomington Fine Arts Council at 952-563-8567 or visit www.bloomingtonfinearts.com.

CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Located in Bloomington Civic Plaza at the corner of West 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road, the Center for the Arts is a first-class facility housing seven arts organizations. For facility information, call 952-563-8889. For exhibit information and events, visit www.btacmn.org or call 952-563-8575.



ATRIUM GALLERY

CONVERGENCES

The semi-abstract works of Monica Reede will be featured in the Atrium Gallery through March 3.

GALLERY HOURS

Hours:	M - F	8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
	Sa	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
	Su	1 - 10 p.m.

For all theater tickets, call the Box Office at 952-563-8575
WEBSITE KEYWORDS:
CENTER FOR THE ARTS.

BLACK BOX THEATER

MOONLIGHT AND MAGNOLIAS

Witness the creative process behind *Gone with the Wind* during Bloomington Civic Theatre's production of *Moonlight and Magnolias*, directed by Mary Cutler, **March 1 - 24**. Tickets are \$20. Student and senior discounts available.

INEZ GREENBERG GALLERY

COMPOSING THE ELEMENTS

Painters David Knowlton and Joonja Lee Mornes join forces with blown glass artist David Royce in *Composing the Elements*, **February 22 - April 5**. Artists' talk offered March 28, 7 p.m.



LOVE IS ALIVE... & KICKIN'

Alive & Kickin' is an inspirational group of 25 high-spirited, charismatic seniors who spread their musical message as they explore contemporary genres of music ranging from pop to gospel to Motown. *Love is Alive... & Kickin'* is a musical journey on the roller coaster of love. Performances are **Friday, March 1, 7:30 p.m.**, and **Saturday, March 2, 2 p.m.** and **7:30 p.m.** Tickets are \$25 adults; \$22 seniors and \$18 students.

SCHNEIDER THEATER

FRED ASTAIRE AND THE SONGWRITERS

Arne Fogel, Maud Hixson and The Rick Carlson Trio present the works legendary composers wrote for Fred Astaire, **Saturday, February 23, 7:30 p.m.** Tickets are \$22 adults; \$19 seniors and \$16 students.



MARCHING AROUND

The Medalist Concert Band presents Marches from Around the World, **Sunday, March 3, 4 p.m.** Tickets are \$12 adults; \$10 seniors/students.



ANGELICA CANTANTI YOUTH CHOIRS BENEFIT CONCERT

The Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs and alumni will present a special concert, **Sunday, February 24, 3 p.m.**, to support a scholarship fund established in honor of Rita Docter's 25 years of dedicated leadership. Tickets are \$25 and include a dessert reception.





STAY SAFE AND DRY VALUABLE TIPS TO AVOID A CLOTHES DRYER FIRE

If you're like most people, you don't like to think about doing laundry, but did you know that cleaning and maintaining your dryer is vital to the safety of your home?

Clothes dryer problems account for 92 percent of all home fires involving a washing machine, dryer or washer and dryer combination. The leading cause of home clothes dryer fires is dirty lint filters. Bloomington Fire Prevention offers the following tips for keeping your clothes dry and your home safe.

- Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
- Do not use a dryer without a filter.
- Clean lint filters before or after each load of laundry. Remove lint that has collected around the drum.
- Rigid or flexible metal venting material should be used to sustain proper air flow and drying time.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent pipe is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap opens when the dryer is operating. Once a year, or more often if it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry, clean lint out of the vent pipe or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.
- Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
- Turn the dryer off if you leave home or when you go to bed.

For more fire safety tips, visit the National Fire Prevention Association website at www.nfpa.org/education.



FIRE PREVENTION SAVES LIVES HANDOUTS AND ACTIVITIES

The City of Bloomington's Fire Prevention Division has a wealth of information and fire safety tips, including childrens' activities, on its web page. Did you know the Division maintains more than 30 information handouts about fire safety and fire prevention requirements? Visit the City's website to download handouts on topics ranging from smoke alarms to barbecue grills.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: FIRE HANDOUTS.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

DON'T GET DUPED BY SCAMMERS BEWARE OF "TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE" OFFERS

If an offer seems too good to be true, it usually is, when it comes to home improvement deals offered by people posing as contractors. Luckily, scammers usually share some characteristics that make them easy to identify, including:

- Approaching homeowners in their yards.
- Promising to repair a roof or paint a house with "supplies left over from another job."
- Performing shoddy work with inferior products.
- Having no local connections and driving vehicles with out-of-state license plates.
- Demanding cash payment or offering a big discount for cash.
- Refusing to provide references or warranties.
- Asking for more money than originally agreed upon.
- Asking the homeowner to obtain City permits.

Protect yourself by getting more than one estimate for a home improvement project, taking 24 hours to consider any offer and obtaining proof that a company or individual is licensed and bonded. If you need help determining whether a contractor is licensed to work in Minnesota, contact the Minnesota Department of Labor at 651-284-5012 or visit www.dli.mn.gov/Ccld.asp.

If you suspect you've been approached by or are working with a scam artist, contact the Bloomington Police Department at 952-563-4900.



LOOKING OUT FOR OUR COMMUNITY JOIN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Concerned residents are the best asset any police department has in fighting crime. The Bloomington Police Department's Neighborhood Watch program was developed to train and educate residents to be involved, stay informed and work together with their neighbors to address mutual concerns and find solutions. A watch program is neighbors helping neighbors. For more information, contact the Crime Prevention Coordinator at 952-563-8808 or e-mail police@ci.bloomington.mn.us.



PROTECTING OUR FURRY FRIENDS DON'T FORGET TO LICENSE YOUR PET

The City requires all dogs and cats, three months or older, to be licensed and vaccinated against rabies. The regulation of pets protects the health and safety of the community. The license tag attached to your pet's collar shows if it has been vaccinated against rabies, proves ownership and allows your pet to be returned to you if it gets lost. License applications are available for download on the City's website or at the Licensing counter located on the first floor of Bloomington Civic Plaza. You will need a copy of your pet's rabies certificate.

If you have just moved to Bloomington or acquired a new pet, you need to apply for a license within 30 days. If you have a new kitten or puppy, you need to apply after the pet receives its first rabies shot, usually at three months of age. If your pet has a current license from another city within the state of Minnesota, you may complete a new application, surrender the other license and pay a transfer fee.

For more information, contact Licensing at 952-563-8728.

GROWING SOME GREEN ANNUAL TREE SALE ADDS HUNDREDS OF TREES TO LANDSCAPE

Each year, the City plants trees in parks and other public areas to ensure that Bloomington's urban forest continues to be one of the community's treasures. The City has planted more than 1,000 trees over the last few years. To increase the number of trees on private properties, Park Maintenance holds an annual public tree sale. Based on last year's sales, 300 trees will be available for purchase this spring.

TREE ORDER FORM

Bloomington residents only. All trees are bare-root, one-and-a-quarter to one-and-a-half inches in diameter and cost \$50 each. *Trees are not guaranteed.*

Name _____
Phone _____
Address _____

Fill in number of each tree type desired. Maximum 5 trees total per household, \$50 each. Check must accompany order.

_____ Autumn Blaze red maple	_____ American sentry linden
_____ Hackberry	_____ Imperial honeylocust
_____ Northwood red maple	_____ Prairie Fire crab apple
_____ River birch	_____ Snowdrift crab apple

Total trees X \$50 ea. = \$ Total cost

Pick up trees at 1800 West Old Shakopee Road on **Saturday, May 4, 9 - 11 a.m.**
Send check and form to City of Bloomington, Park Maintenance,
1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027.



The City's annual tree sale will provide a variety of tree species again this year, including: Autumn Blaze red maple, American sentry linden, hackberry, Imperial honeylocust, Northwood red maple, Prairie Fire crab apple, River birch, and Snowdrift crab apple.

Orders will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Trees are not guaranteed. Visit the City's website for more information and a printable order form.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: TREE SALE.